

**Appendix E – East Sussex Highways Review of the Conserve
Alfriston Groups Traffic Management
Proposals**

Introduction

The Conserve Alfriston Group has been campaigning for an appropriate solution to the issue of traffic management in the village of Alfriston. Their aim is to introduce a corridor wide package of measures between the A27 and Seaford to ease the traffic flow, reduce conflict between road users and minimise large vehicle movements.

In April 2017, they held a public exhibition in the village to present an alternative traffic management solution to the traffic signals being proposed by East Sussex County Council. In May 2018, a petition was presented to the County Council to consider this alternative option. The petition letter, a copy of the measures proposed and a summary of the feedback received from their April 2017 exhibition are at Appendix D to the report.

Design Review

East Sussex Highways has reviewed the proposals presented by the Conserve Alfriston Group. The following summarises the observations made on these measures.

Approach Measures

- Proposal: Improvement to existing 7.5t weight restriction signs along the A27, at Drusillas' roundabout and on the A259 at Seaford.
- *East Sussex Highways Comment:*
Discouraging large vehicles using the road through Alfriston to travel between the A259 and A27 is already an issue the County Council are investigating. This is one of several matters the County Council are in discussion with Highways England about.

Village Gateway Measures

- Proposal: Improved village gateway signs.
- *East Sussex Highways Comment:*
Improvements to existing village gateway signs are a common practice to enhance driver awareness of a change in character of the road. The County Council have worked with many Parish Council's to introduce such measures. Although improvements of gateway signage can be incorporated into a wider package of improvement measures for Alfriston, signing alone will not address the issues that the traffic signals aim to resolve of there being insufficient carriageway width to allow opposing traffic flows to pass.
- Proposal: Give way signs prioritising traffic leaving the Village
- *East Sussex Highways Comment:*
These proposals do not satisfy national standards and therefore could not be promoted. The 'Give way to oncoming traffic' sign (TSRGD¹ diagram no. 615) must be used with the accompanying supplementary plate (TSRGD diagram no. 615.1). Together these signs give clear indication to a driver about what is expected of them. In addition, signs to show that traffic has 'priority over oncoming vehicles' (TSRGD diagram no. 811) and supplementary plate (TSRGD diagram no. 811.1) must be provided for traffic travelling in the opposite direction. It is therefore important that these signs are only used in circumstances where vehicles at each end of the priority section are clearly visible to each other. This will ensure that approaching drivers can make a considered decision about whether it is safe to proceed.

¹ Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016

Village Centre Measures

- Proposal: Change of carriageway surface

- *East Sussex Highways Comment:*

Alterations to the carriageway surface could improve driver awareness of a change in character of the road. Although these measures can be incorporated into a wider package of improvements for Alfriston, this alone will not address the issues traffic signals aim to resolve. This being insufficient carriageway width to allow opposing traffic flows to pass.

Careful consideration of material selection will be needed. Cobbled surfaces may create noise and vibration. If this measure is progressed, further liaison with ESCC Asset Management team as well as Wealden District Council and South Downs National Park Conservation Officers would be recommended.

- Proposal: 20 mph speed restriction

- *East Sussex Highways Comment:*

This measure will be introduced as part of the trial scheme. Subject to the outcomes of the trial and feedback received during this period a permanent 20mph restriction may be introduced.

- Proposal: Simplified parking to improve traffic flows, loading, access, and village life

- *East Sussex Highways Comment:*

Changes in parking within the village may be beneficial and will be considered as part of a package of wider traffic improvements. The proposed traffic signal scheme will require changes to existing parking restrictions along the High Street. Intrinsic to the successful operation of any parking restriction is its enforcement. In Wealden, parking enforcement is still the responsibility of Sussex Police.

- Proposal: Use of Vehicle Activated signs with in a priority system to control vehicles

- *East Sussex Highways Comment:*

It is important to ensure that any traffic sign conforms to the relevant legislation, direction or guidance to ensure that it is legal and the message that it gives to a road user is consistent across the entire national road network. Compliance with the relevant legislation and guidance will ensure that drivers can clearly understand what is expected of them and that there is no ambiguity or misdirection. Any driver not complying with a specific regulation or direction conveyed by an authorised traffic sign can be subject to appropriate enforcement action if required.

The use of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) is covered by a national Traffic Advisory Leaflet which states that VAS are not a substitute for standard fixed signs. The static signing must remain in place in addition to any VAS to ensure that the road safety message is available to all drivers and continues to be received in the event of a power failure. VAS should only be used to target drivers that are exceeding a speed that is considered 'safe' for the conditions. They should therefore only be actively illuminated for a small proportion of drivers and should not act as a repeater or reminder to drivers. These signs may also be used to warn of specific hazards but there are only a limited number of warning signs that are allowed without special authorisation to be used in combination with the 'Slow Down' message.

The Conserve Alfriston Group propose to utilise the VAS in an un-conventional manner and special authorisation of this sign would be required from the Secretary of State for Transport. Although this is a process the County Council could pursue, and in the past, have applied for the use of non-prescribed signs, it would be necessary to demonstrate that standard signs cannot be used in the first instance. Given the purpose of the VAS is to 'control' traffic it is considered an authorised alternative method would be the use of traffic signals.

The proposals are utilising traffic signs not prescribed for use within the TSRGD and the utilisation of VAS in an un-conventional manner. There is a risk the instruction given to approaching traffic is ambiguous and could misdirect drivers. ESCC Road Safety team would not support this approach being put forward.

In view of this, together with the other issues already highlighted East Sussex Highways would therefore not recommend these proposals.

- Proposal: Use of mirror to improve driver forward visibility at the 'Moonrakers'

- *East Sussex Highways Comment:*
The use of traffic mirrors would only be considered in exceptional circumstances where there is a proven crash record and other solutions have already been fully examined.

An approaching driver may not readily identify that a mirror is in place as it would need to be positioned out of the driver's usual line of sight. A driver concentrating on a mirror image would also not be looking out for other potentially more vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

The images given and their interpretation would not aid road safety as drivers can easily misinterpret the information they provide and misjudge an approaching vehicle's speed or distance. Poor visibility conditions such as rain, fog and snow can significantly reduce a mirror's effectiveness and reflected glare and dazzle from low sunlight or an approaching vehicle's headlights can lead to drivers being unsighted or temporarily blinded.